

State Technical Committee Meeting

3/10/2015

9:30am – 11:30pm

The Nature Conservancy
22 Bridge Street, 4th Floor
Concord, NH 03301

Meeting Called By: ***Rick Ellsmore, STC, NH NRCS***

Type of meeting: **State Technical Committee**

Facilitator: ***Rick Ellsmore, STC, NH NRCS***

Note taker: ***Cyndy Camp, NRCS***

Attendees:

Rick Ellsmore, Cyndy Camp, Kim McCracken, Victoria Smith, Sheela Johnson, Andrew Madison, Gregg McPherson, Vicky Stafford, Peter Whitcomb, Rob Clark, Jim Oehler, Edna Feighner, Andy Boyce, Lenny Lord, Wendy Weisiger, Ron Rhodes, Eric Williams, Jan McClure, Rick Chormann, Tom Thomson, Amy Ouellette, Stacy Luke, Linda Brownson, Ted Kendziora, Rob Larocque, Stephen Walker, Kari Thurman, Tim Fleury, Eddie Edwards

Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item: **Welcome, Introductions, and Partner Updates**

Rick Ellsmore, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Began the meeting at 9:30 am.

Members Updates

Amy Oulette, UNH Cooperative Extension: We are currently working on our university budget proposal, looking at the last couple of years and targeting new funding. Daimon Meeh has graduated the first 12 students from his hybrid Grazing Class where they come up with a grazing plan and ask NRCS to fund. Becky Sideman recently received a large grant!

Rob Clark, USFS: We work with State Foresters and are reviewing and updating State Forest Action Plans that were directed by Congress in the 2008 Farm Bill. NH is the 2nd most forested state in the nation. Our mission is to keep forests as forests.

Linda Brownson, NHACD: NRCS is our primary partner. We are working on a pollinator project that involves six different sites, each with a different focus, and will be implemented in May. These projects correspond nicely with the National Pollinators are Local Heroes promotion.

Andy Boyce, Upper Valley Land Trust: We are currently working on an FRPP project in Lyme, NH and another on the Connecticut River in Cornish (ALE & LChip funded). We look to protect ag operations in local communities and are acquiring a wetland mitigation property in Lebanon that equals 250 acres, which will be added to an existing tract of 100 acres, for a total of 350 acres protected near the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center.

Matt Flanders, Representative from Senator Ayotte's office: I am here on behalf of Senator Ayotte. Please let me know if you need anything.

Vicky Stafford, Serving Rockingham & Strafford County Conservation Districts: We are continuing our work on pollinator and cottontail projects. Also, we are almost ready to add a yeoman plow to the farm equipment rentals that we have available.

Roger Noonan sends his regards. We are currently managing over 60 projects including 7 New England cottontail sites.

Report to NH State Technical Committee

The New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts represents and supports the states ten soil and water conservation districts. Summary of recent work

- Training of Technical Service Providers (TSP's)
 - With grant support from NHDES we are training TSP's to perform Nutrient Management plans in support of the NHDES NPS plan.
- NH Pollinator Project
 - Funded by USDA-SCBG will conduct multiple workshops across the state this summer. Project lead is Lionel Chute from Sullivan County Conservation District
- NHACD Annual meeting held in December "Adapting to a changing climate"
 - Provided attendees several perspectives on adaptation and mitigation strategies for working lands as well as an EPA presentation on the proposed Waters of the US(WOTUS) rule.
- NHACD is continuing to work with NRCS, RCCD, HCCD, MCCD, Mack's Apples and the town of Litchfield on promoting New England Cottontail Habitat.
- NHACD is beginning work on a Community Foods planning grant funded by USDA-NIFA grant
 - The grant seeks to improve farm viability by investigating ways locally produced food can be made accessible to socially disadvantaged families and to conduct innovative demonstration projects.
- NHACD President Linda Brownson, Executive Director Roger Noonan and RCCD District Manger Lenny Lord attended the NACD annual meeting in New Orleans.
 - Noonan presented on the RCPP in his role as NACD's RCPP Task Force chairman.
- All of our districts are working on important issues impacting soil and water quality, invasive species, as well as farm viability issues such as food hubs and access to markets issues.
- NELM March 30/31 space is limited Associate Chief Leonard Jordan and Deputy Chief Tony Kramer attending. ◦ NELM is a meeting of New England's Conservation Districts.
- Saving the best for last we are all very proud of one of our own:
The Stephen H. Taylor Leadership Award for Agricultural Professionals, recognizing leadership and commitment to New Hampshire Agriculture, was given to Amanda Costello Littleton of Chesterfield during a ceremony at the annual Farm & Forest Expo on February 6, 2015. Congratulations, Amanda!

Ed Edwards, Representative from Congressman Guinta's office: I'm Eddie Edwards from Congressman Guinta's office.

Wendy Weisiger, SPNH: We often work with NRCS, Fish & Game, and Trout Unlimited to put conservation efforts and habitat projects on the ground.

Keri Thurman, Representative from Senator Shaheen's office: Representing Senator Shaheen's office. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help with your conservation efforts.

Steve Walker, NH Office of Energy & Planning: We provide stewardship and monitoring in 400+ areas around the state.

Andrew Madison, Granite State Rural Water Association: We are a non-profit providing technical assistance in developing source water protection plans. We recently wrapped up two projects in Walpole and Hillsborough and are now doing work around Lake Winnepesaukee.

Gregg MacPherson, USDA Rural Development: We have over 40 fully-funded programs. Three to highlight today are: the Value Added Producer Grant, the Rural Business Development Grant (formerly known as the Rural Business Enterprise Grant), and the Rural Energy Assistance Program, which now receives \$1M for this program alone (it funds renewable energy projects such as geothermal, wind, solar, etc.). Please call RD at (603) 223-6035 for more information.

Edna Feighner, NH Division of Historic Resources: We review a lot of the projects you all initiate, and assist in emergency preparedness planning.

Jim Oehler, NH Fish & Game: Our Wildlife Action Plan now shows up to 179 species in need of protection. We take actions to ameliorate the threats. Our stakeholder meeting is coming up. There are small grant programs that provide small grants to landowners, to help provide habitat. We are applying for VPAHIP (Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program).

Ron Rhodes, CT River Watershed Council: We received a grant from New Hampshire's Charitable Foundation, which will provide funding for five EQIP landowners. Also doing culvert work and improving brook trout habitat.

Peter Whitcomb, NRCS Soil Scientist: Kim will be presenting about soil so I won't rain on her parade.

Rob Larocque, Merrimack County Conservation District: I'm Rob Larocque from MCCC.

Ted Kendziora, US Fish & Wildlife Service: Currently working throughout New England regarding New England cottontail.

Victoria Smith, NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food: We are gearing up for maple season and sugarhouse inspections. Also anticipating a busy organic season.

Sheila Johnson, USDA Forest Service - White Mountain National Forest: I'm here today in place of Roger Simmons. We are working on Carol, Coos, and Grafton Counties' invasive species as well as Upper Ammonoosuc River waters. We try to ensure that best management practices are implemented in forestry and on trails. We are monitoring for the Two Chiefs' initiative.

Rick Chormann, NH Geological Survey: We'll be doing active geologic mapping this year and next. Culvert assessments are part of the flood hazards program. Interns will collect according to standard protocol and enter information into the statewide database.

Jan McClure, The Nature Conservancy: We have two ALE projects, one in Durham and another in Lancaster.

Eric Williams, NH DES: Our Soak Up The Rain program empowers property owners to install rain collection systems for storm water. Landscaper training is coming up in the Spring. Our Road Salt Applicator Certification program for the private sector makes them entitled against liability protection against slip and fall claims. Benefits the business and best management practices as well as recordkeeping.

Tom Thompson, Tree Farmer: Crotchet Mountain Foundation was named the 2015 Outstanding Community Tree Farm of the Year. They have one of the longest, fully accessible trail systems in the country. Current use rates have been established – farm land was unchanged. In forestry, log prices are good this year. A plus is that diesel prices are down.

Stacy Luke, Merrimack County Conservation District: We are getting ready for next week's annual meeting. Working on pollinators and cottontail.

Agenda Item: NRCS Soils Data Update (part 2) – Example of Impacts & Issues in NH Presenter: **Kim McCracken**

**Kim's PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

Agenda Item: LiDAR, What is it? Where do we have it? How is it used? How can we get more? Presenter: **Rick Chormann**

**Rick's PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

Agenda Item: Farm Bill & NRCS Updates Presenter: **Rick Ellsmore**

**Rick's PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

Rick Ellsmore: As we wrap up, here are a few points to remember: there is no Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) in the new farm bill; the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) has moved over to the Sugar River; and 7% from Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) shifts to the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

Adjourned 11:25

